

## Meeting Summary

The following is a summary of issues discussed at the StudentStat Meeting on December 4, 2013. The lead agencies for this meeting were the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Analysis is provided by StateStat.

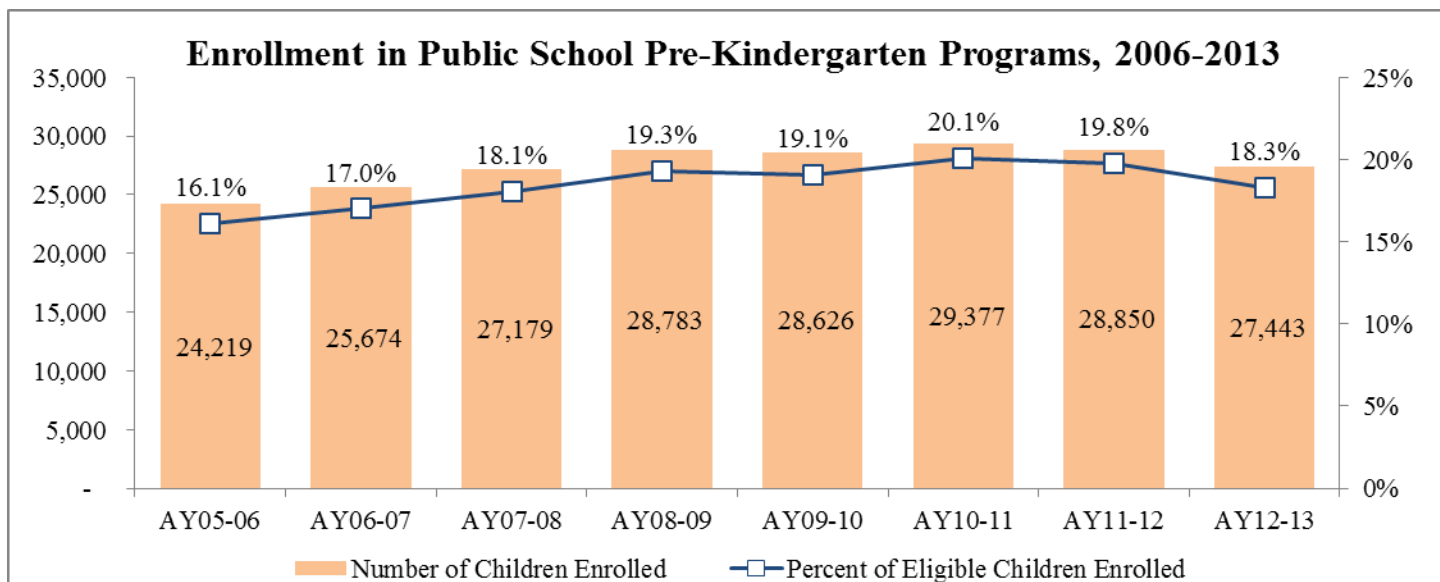
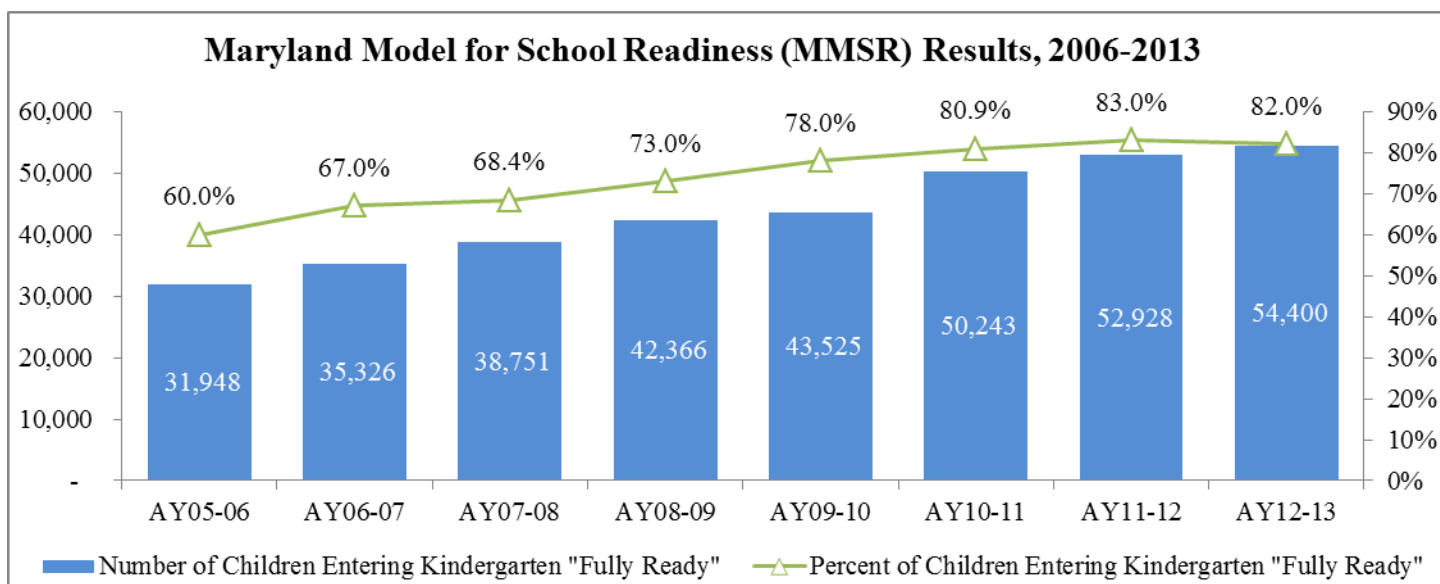
- **Background.** In 2009, Governor O'Malley set a goal to improve student achievement and school, college, and career readiness in Maryland by 25 percent by the end of 2015. To achieve this goal, the Governor, together with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, developed a plan around six core strategies, listed below. The State uses eleven measures to track progress for the education goal, which span the life of a student from pre-kindergarten to college graduation. The measures include progress on standardized tests like the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) Exams, and the number of Associates Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees awarded in Maryland each year. On average, there has been a 32.1 percent improvement in the eleven measures since the 2005-06 school year, exceeding the original goal of a 25 percent improvement.

Framework for Achieving Education Goal - Strategies
Support and Manage the Transition to New Standards and Assessments to Better Prepare Maryland Students for College and Careers in an Era of Global Competition
Increase Capacity of the Comprehensive Statewide Longitudinal Data System
Close the "Readiness Gap" and Improve Transitions into School, Higher Education, and the Workforce
Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education
Expand Career and Technology Education (CTE)
Provide Teacher and Principal Support

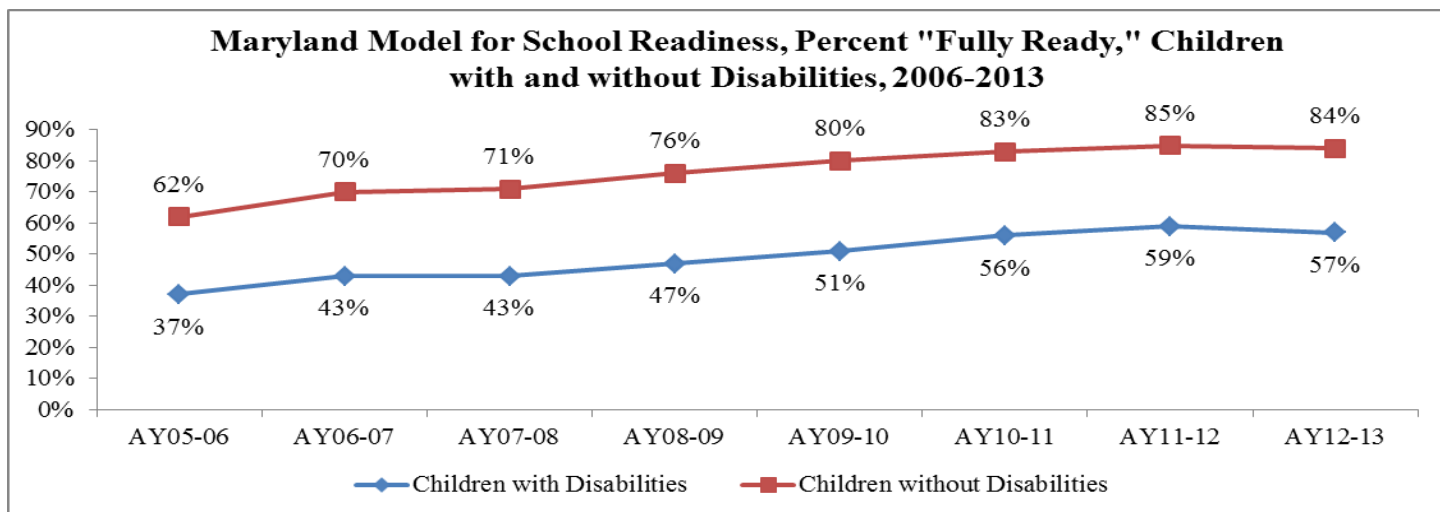
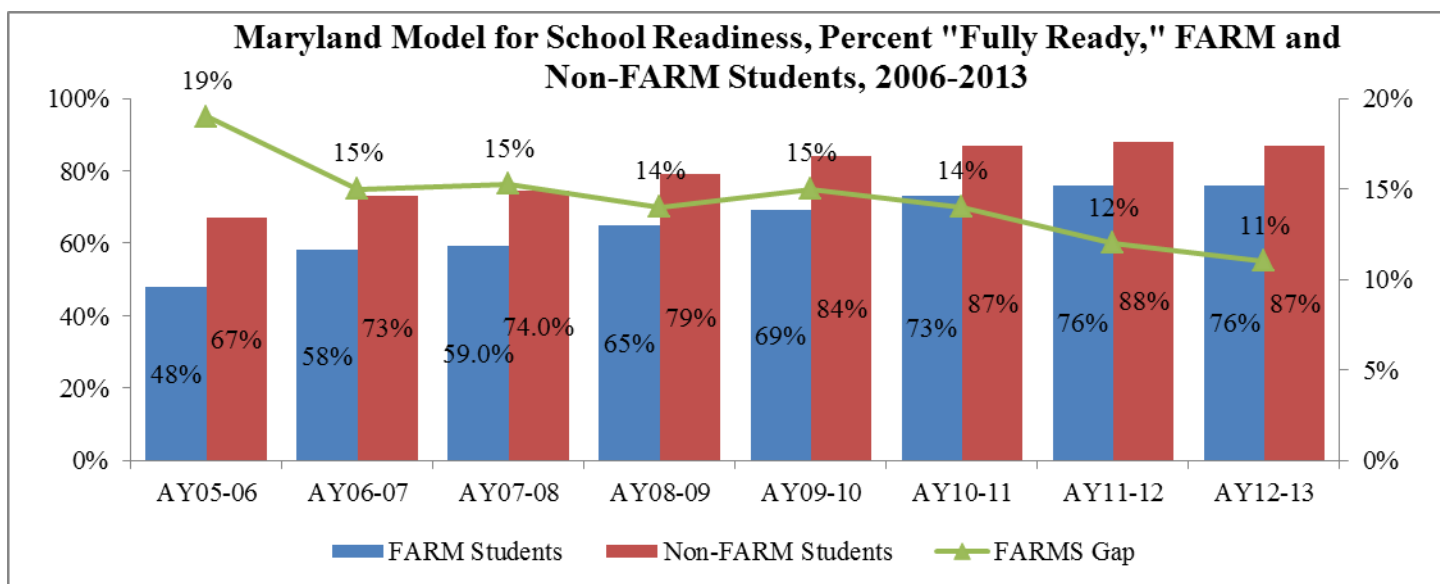
### *Early Childhood Education*

- **Eighty-Two Percent of Children who Took the MMSR Last Year Were Found to be Fully Ready for Kindergarten.** In 2001, Maryland became one of the first states in the country to administer a comprehensive assessment to children before kindergarten using the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) test. Scores on the MMSR are converted into three categories that illustrate a child's level of preparation for kindergarten classes: full readiness, approaching readiness, and developing readiness. One of the Governor's education goals is to increase the number of children entering kindergarten "fully ready" to 90 percent by 2015. The MMSR defines "fully ready" as a student who "consistently demonstrates skills, behaviors, and abilities, which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully." The latest results from MSDE show the percentage of students entering kindergarten fully ready dropped by one percent last school year, which was the first year results have declined since the beginning of the Governor's administration. However, the State has made significant progress in recent years in preparing children to learn in the classroom, raising the percent of children fully ready for kindergarten from 60 percent in 2005-06 to 82 percent in 2012-13.

MSDE reported that a number of factors contributed to the slight drop in kindergarten readiness last year, including demographic changes. However, the agency believes the most significant cause of the drop last year was that roughly 3,000 more children were enrolled in "informal" or "home care" programs than the previous year. MSDE indicated that the type of care a child receives before kindergarten can have a dramatic impact on school readiness and that students who receive informal care typically have low scores relative to other groups. The most recent MMSR data shows that 71 percent of children in informal programs were found to be ready for kindergarten, compared to 83 percent of children enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten programs. Pre-kindergarten is a very effective way to prepare students for learning, and MSDE indicated that there is a relationship between the drop in enrollment last year in public school pre-kindergarten programs and the drop in MMSR scores.

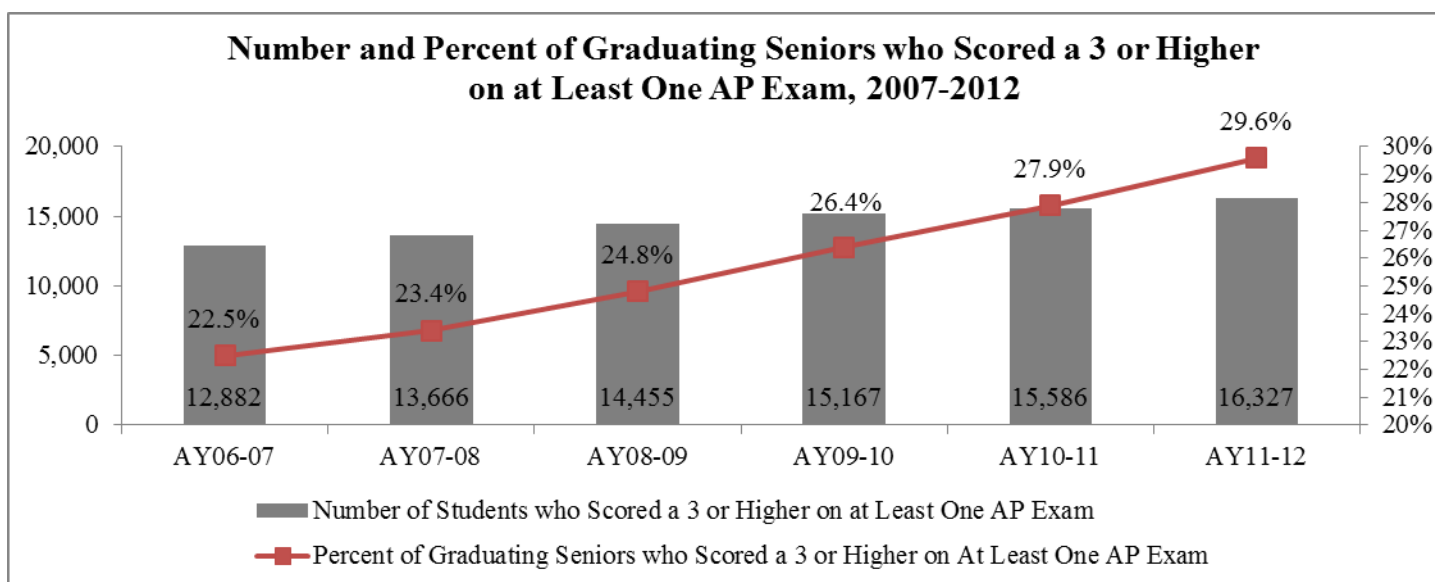
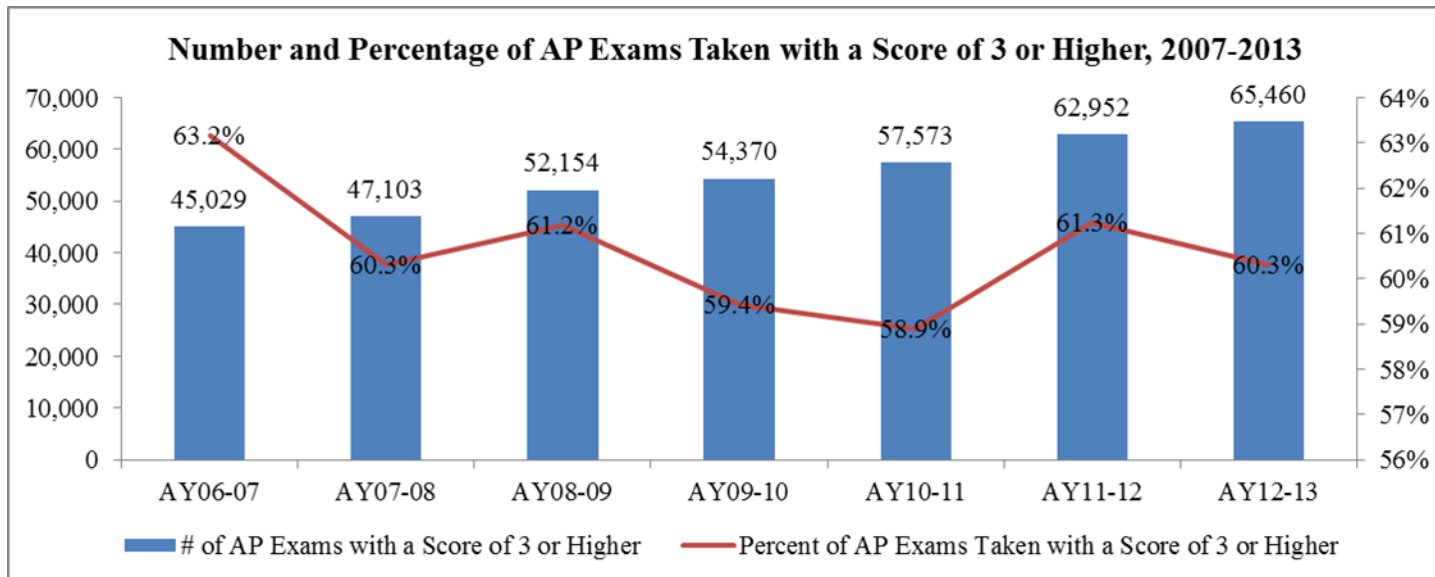


- Kindergarten Readiness by Subgroup.** The percentage of students from low-income households entering kindergarten fully ready, as indicated by a Free and Reduced Price Meal (FARM) status, remained at 76 percent last year. The State has made significant progress in recent years in preparing low-income children for school, as the MMSR readiness score for FARM students has increased by 58.3 percent since 2006. The MMSR achievement gap between FARM and non-FARM students has decreased from 19 percent in 2006 to 11 percent last year, but the decrease last year occurred because of a one percent drop in the score of non-FARM students. The percentage of fully-ready kindergarten students was flat or decreased for every subgroup last year, with the largest declines occurring for Hispanics (-3 percent--74-71), English Language Learners (-3 percent--72-69), and children with disabilities (-2 percent--59-57). MSDE reported that it addresses inequality in MMSR performance using Early Learning Challenge Grant funds from Race to the Top. The grant period for the Early Learning Challenge will run out in December 2015. MSDE reported that the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services focuses on programs for children under the age of five who have disabilities. There are reform efforts underway to improve these intervention services, and the agency hopes to see the MMSR gap between children with and without disabilities begin to narrow in the coming years. MSDE estimates that roughly eight percent of kindergartners have a disability.



### ***Graduating High School Students with Passing AP Scores and Credit from Dually Enrolled Courses***

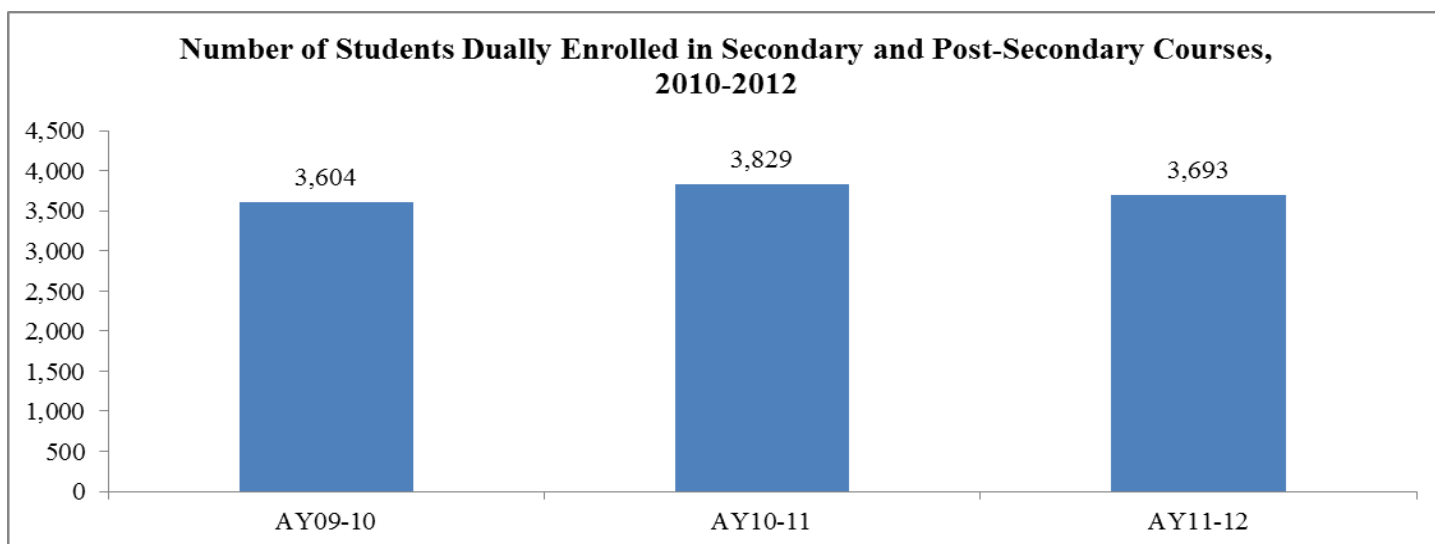
- Overview.** In the summer, the Governor's Office asked MSDE to investigate ways the State can better track the number of high school students graduating with college credit. The MSDE reported there are two primary sources of data that are now being used to help determine this number. The first data point is the number of high school seniors who graduate with a three or better on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam. The second data point is the number of students who are dually enrolled in secondary and post-secondary courses while in high school.
- Maryland Continues to Lead the Nation in AP Performance.** The most recent data from the College Board shows that Maryland students scored a three or better on 65,460 AP exams last year, which is a 45.4 percent increase since 2007. The Board found that 29.6 percent of students graduated high school in Maryland after scoring a three or better on at least one AP exam in 2011-12. MSDE has not received updated data yet for last year, but Maryland has now led the nation in this measure for the previous seven years. MSDE stated that it is a real testament to the teachers and principals across the State that roughly 20,000 more AP exams were taken last year than in 2007 with a score of three or better, and the pass rate has stayed roughly the same. Maryland remains a leader for the country in both AP participation and success.



- Number of High School Students Graduating with College Credit through Dual Enrollment Courses.**  
 This month, MSDE included the number of students from 2010-2012 who were dually enrolled in college level courses at Maryland public institutions while attending high school. The data shows that roughly 3,700 high school students were dually enrolled in college courses in 2012 by matching MSDE graduating information with data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). However, there are several limitations to this data. First, the NSC only tracks enrollment data, so it is not possible to determine whether a student actually completed a course and earned credit for it. The data also reflects dual enrollment courses only for graduating students, so it does not count students who may have earned college credit before the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Prior to StudentStat, MSDE reported that it believes MHEC is better suited to track credit earned through dual enrollment courses, and the most accurate data will eventually come from matching students via the Maryland Longitudinal Data System. During the meeting, Secretary Howard said its data system has improved tremendously over the last several years and that it continues to expand. She indicated that MHEC now

collects far more data than it used to and dual enrollment is one of the new metrics that it will begin tracking this year.

MHEC is collecting dual enrollment data from higher education institutions for the 2013-14 school year, and it will give that information to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System. The agency will submit a report to StateStat prior to the next meeting on what the preliminary data shows. This information will be helpful moving forward, but MSDE indicated that work still needs to be done throughout Maryland in making the distinction between students who are concurrently enrolled in college courses and dually enrolled. Individuals are concurrently enrolled if they are taking college level courses that do not count as credit for high school graduation, as opposed to dually enrolled courses that provide both high school and college credit. MSDE reported that there will be a meeting in the next few weeks with various education stakeholders to examine the changes in the law from the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act to make sure different entities are using the same definitions for critical terms moving forward.



### ***Implementation of the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013***

- MSDE and MHEC are Working to Reduce the Number of High School Graduates Needing Remediation Courses.** The [College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act](#) of 2013 (CCRCCA) was signed into law on May 16, 2013, establishing a number of requirements intended to improve college and career readiness for high school students. One component of the Bill is focused on reducing the number of individuals who are forced to take remediation courses after high school by developing a system to identify these students prior to their high school graduation. The law requires, beginning in 2015, that all students be assessed for college readiness no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in English, literacy, and math. The State will begin using the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test to determine college readiness for the 2014-15 school year, which will be aligned with the new Common Core curriculum. The CCRCCA requires MSDE to collaborate with local schools and community colleges to develop and implement transition courses for high school seniors who are not ready for college by the end of grade 11 based on their PARCC assessment. The transition courses are intended to reduce the number of students taking remediation courses after high school, which increased significantly during the 2011-12 school year. The number of Maryland high school graduates required to take remediation courses in math, reading, and English at four- year public colleges all increased by at least 27 percent from 2011 to 2012. MHEC expects to receive updated data for 2012-13 before the end of the year. The CCRCCA also requires MSDE, MHEC, and other stakeholders to submit a report to the General Assembly by December 15, 2013 examining the

development, content, and implementation of transition courses and how the PARCC scores will be reflected on high school transcripts.

MSDE stated that the CCRCCA will significantly help schools identify students who are not college ready at an earlier point, so they can receive additional support prior to graduating. The agency has been working with numerous stakeholders and local jurisdictions to make sure it is following the color and spirit of the new law in providing effective transition courses next year. MSDE has been researching and developing the framework for what the CCRCCA transition courses will look like, and they expect to have a finalized plan by the spring of 2014. The agency will submit its report of preliminary recommendations to the General Assembly by the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline or shortly thereafter.

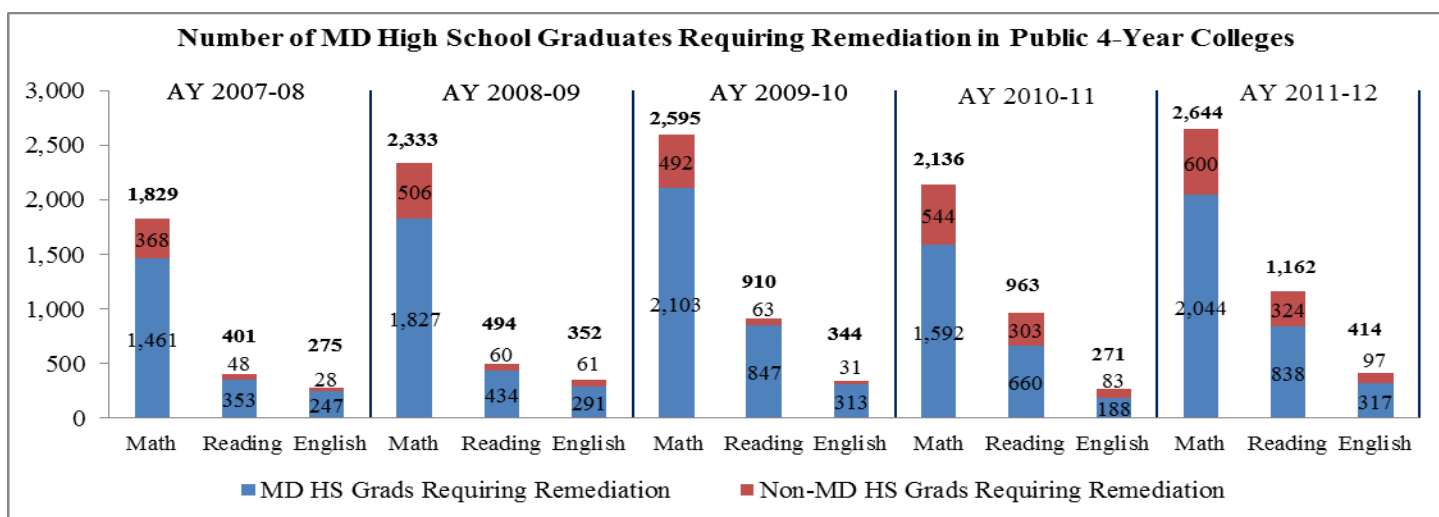
Secretary Howard said the higher education community has been working hard over the past three years, particularly in mathematics, to redesign remediation courses so they are not as much of a roadblock to graduation as they have been in the past. One strategy some community colleges have been very successful at implementing recently is breaking down remedial math courses into modular units, which allows students to move on to credit bearing courses after mastering particular modules and concepts---as opposed to having to take broad-based remedial classes.

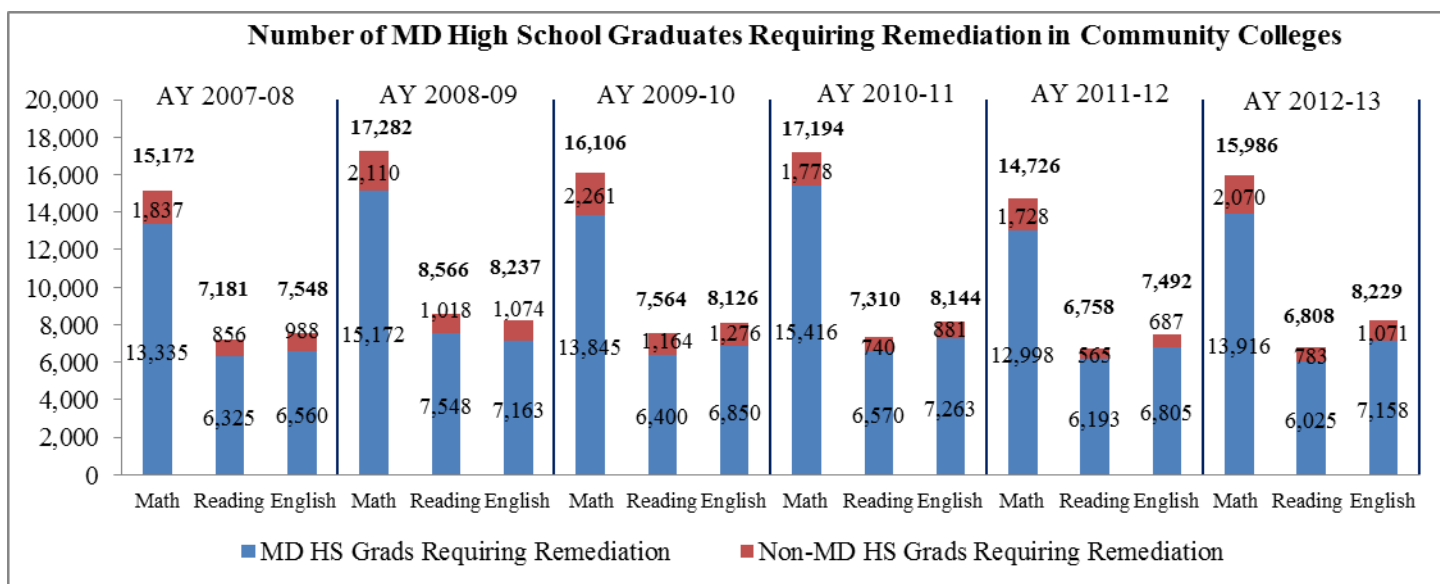
### CCRCCA Requirements to Develop Transition Courses for Students who are not College and Career Ready

#### Transition Courses and College and Career Readiness Assessment Study

1). MSDE, MHEC, and local boards of education must study the transition courses required by CCRCCA to be given to high school seniors who are not college and career ready.

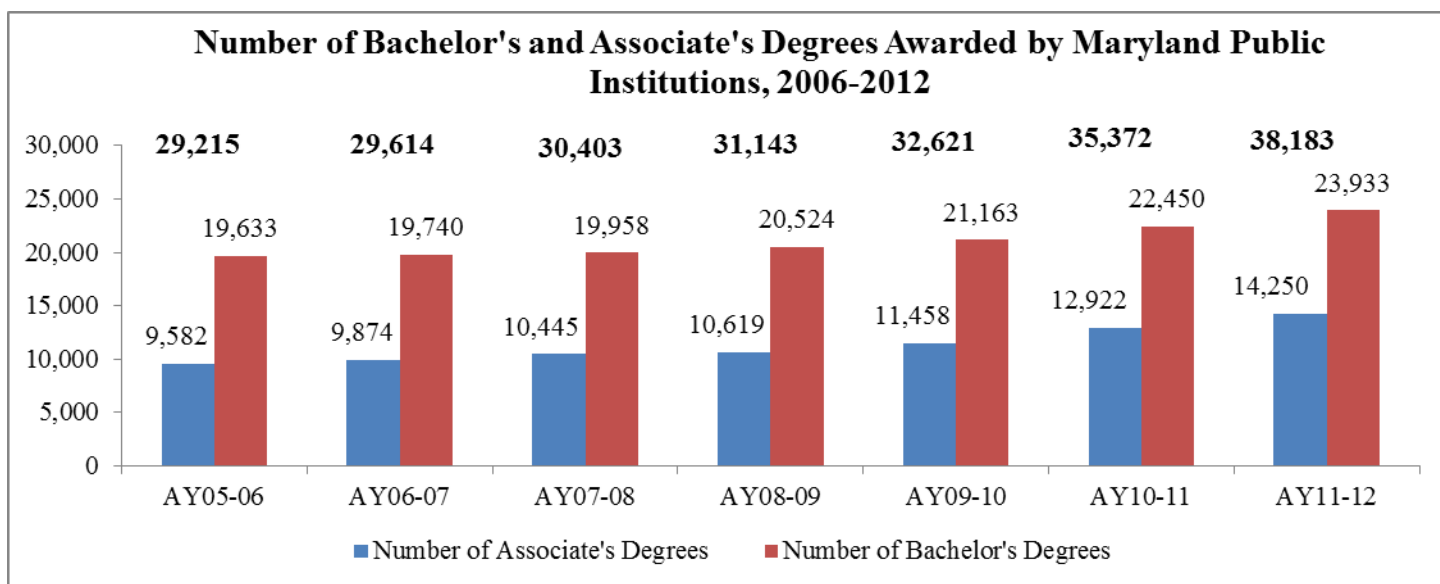
- Study whether the transition courses will be credit-bearing and if they should be required for high school graduation
- The Study must also address how students' level of college and career readiness will be reflected on High School transcripts
- The transition courses must align with the Common Core State Curriculum
- A report of the study, including any recommendations, must be submitted by December 15, 2013.





- The Number of Degrees Awarded by Maryland Public Higher Education Institutions Continues to Grow.** The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 puts in place several requirements related to college completion. Specifically, it focuses on near completers, degree pathways, and reducing dual enrollment costs. According to data submitted by MHEC, 38,183 bachelor's and associate's degrees were awarded from Maryland Public Institutions of Higher Learning in 2012, which is a 28.9 percent increase since 2007. The number of degrees awarded in Maryland has increased every year during the Governor's administration. MHEC acknowledged the consistent improvement in this area can partly be explained by increasing enrollment, but argued that it is also a measure of the hard working faculty and administrators in higher education institutions who are focused on graduating students.

MHEC has previously identified degree plans as an important component of helping students to complete their degree. The CCRCCA will go a long way towards increasing career preparation by requiring students at four-year and community colleges to complete a degree plan. Each undergraduate student enrolled in a public four-year college must file a degree plan with the institution as soon as practicable, and no later than 45 hours of completed course work. Every degree-seeking student at a community college must file a degree plan with the institution upon entering the school. All degree plans must follow a pathway to a degree and be developed in consultation with an academic advisor. In addition, academic units must establish schedules for regular periodic review of student progress.



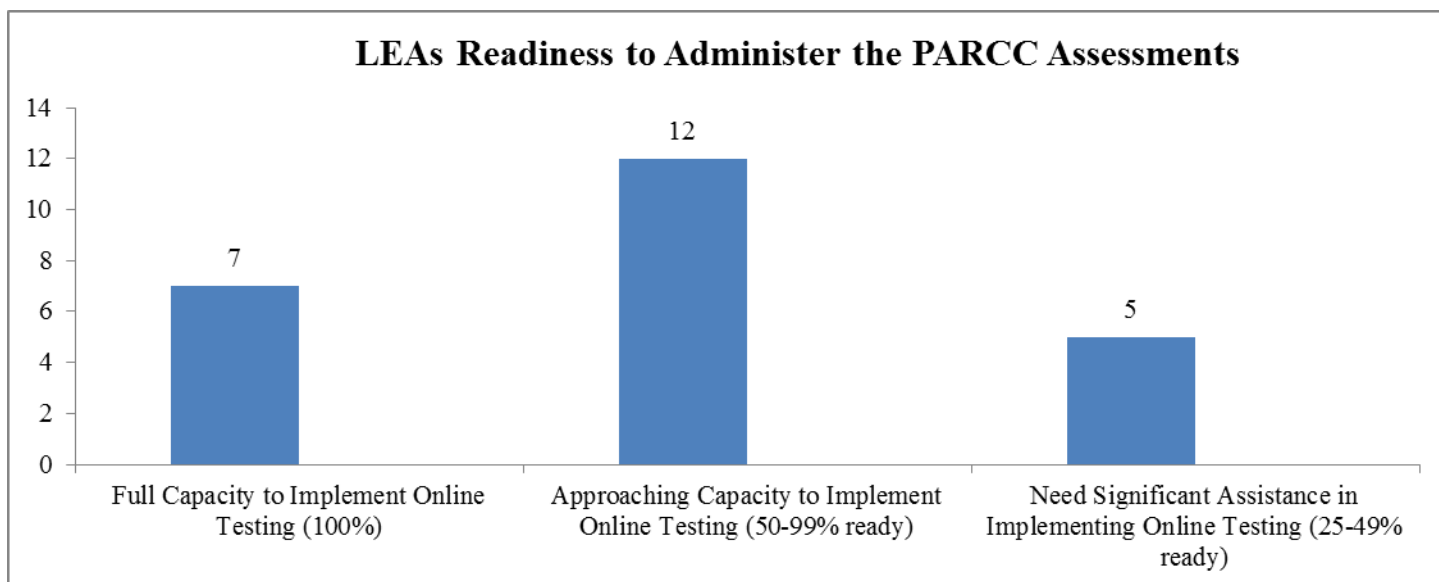
- MHEC Has Helped Approximately 300 “Near Completers” Re-Enroll in College this Past Year.** Part of the focus of the CCRCCA is to reduce the number of “near completers” in Maryland, which the law defines as “an individual who has completed some college credits but does not have a college degree and is no longer attending an institution of higher education.” The CCRCCA requires MHEC, in collaboration with institutions of higher learning, to develop a statewide communication campaign to identify near completers in the State and encourage them to re-enroll in school to earn a degree. The campaign must specifically target near completers who earned a minimum grade point average of 2.0 while in college and earned either 45 credit hours at a community college or 90 credit hours at a four-year institution. The plan should provide an incentive for near completers to re-enroll in school and for colleges to identify and graduate near completers. MHEC reported that it is currently in the process of submitting a report to the General Assembly with the details of the campaign, potential obstacles, and the expected timeline for implementation. The agency also stated that due to the efforts of the Governor and General Assembly, it received half a million dollars to help campuses support students who were very close to graduating before leaving school. MHEC started with four-year campuses and awarded \$50,000 grants to eight institutions that had a total of roughly 16,000 students who completed 90 credit hours but failed to graduate. Secretary Howard said that by providing students with a little extra financial help, close to 300 students have been reenrolled already within eight months of the program, and 30 students have already received their degrees. She explained that for many students it took a relatively small financial award of less than \$1,000 to return, and that students have been extremely grateful to their schools for reaching out and not forgetting about them.

### ***Maryland’s Readiness Plan for the Administration of the PARCC Assessments***

- Maryland Schools are Preparing for the PARCC Assessments.** Maryland was one of eighteen states, plus the District of Columbia, to join the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium in 2010. As a result, the State must prepare to administer the PARCC online test to all Maryland students during the 2014-15 school year. According to MSDE, PARCC has developed a “technology capacity tool” that was recently used in Maryland to determine that seven local education agencies (LEAs) have full capacity to implement online testing (100%), 12 are approaching capacity (50-99% ready), and five need significant assistance (25-49% ready). In the spring of 2014, all 1,450 schools in Maryland will conduct a field test assessment in at least one classroom to identify potential problems---roughly 50,000 students will be tested. After the completion of the field test, MSDE states that it will be

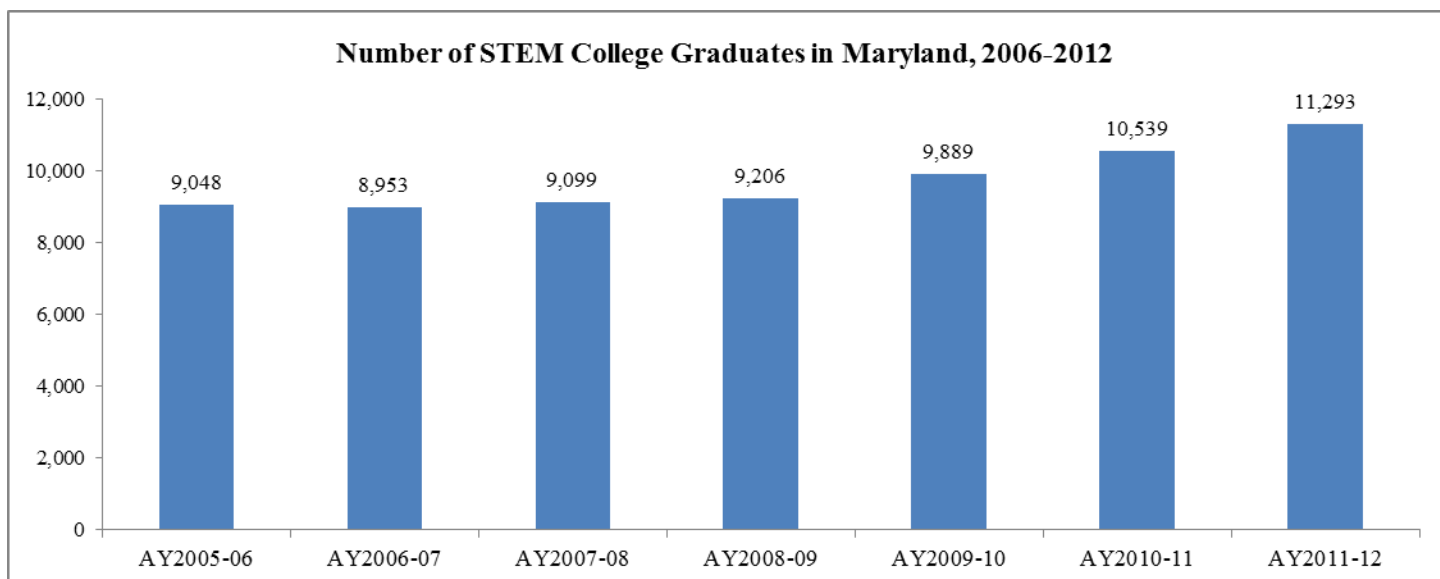
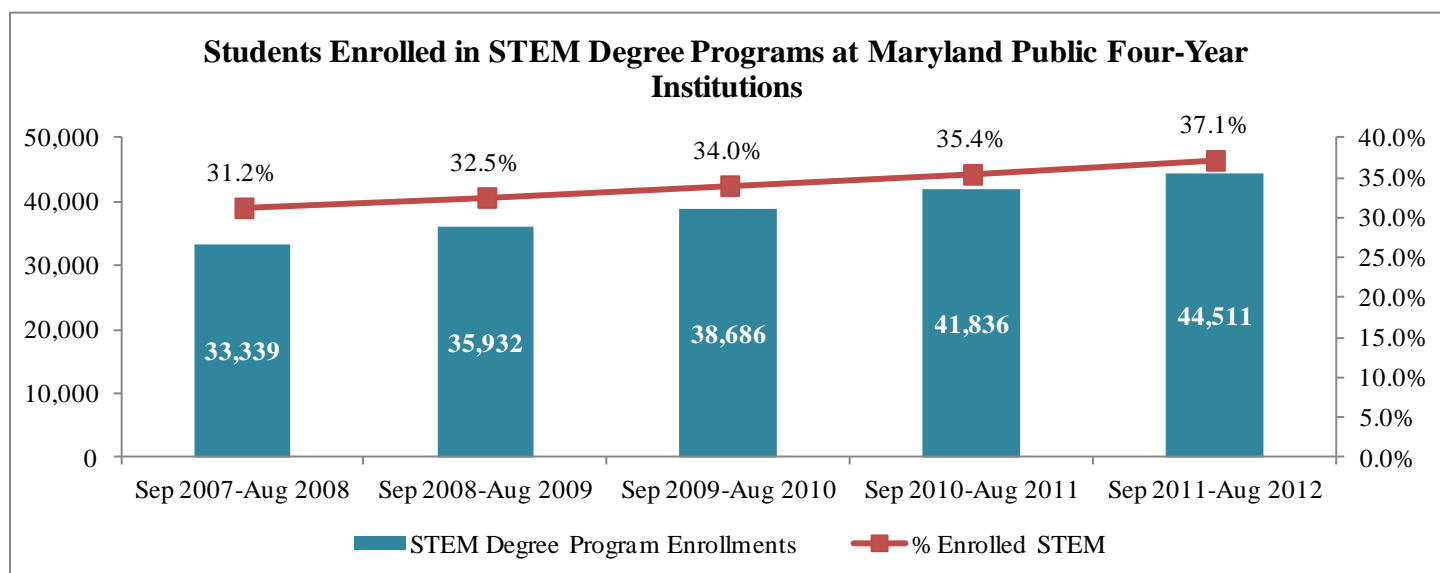
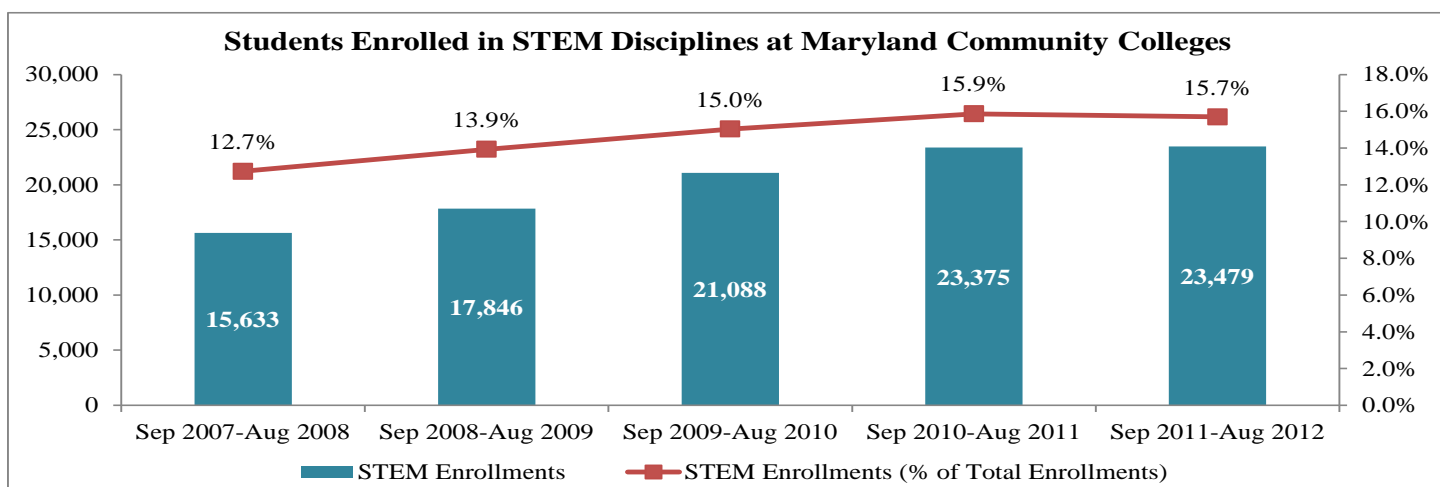
better able to assess the needs of each LEA and create a specific implementation plan for each school district. MSDE has been working with EducationSuperHighway over the past several months to test internet speed and bandwidth in every school in Maryland. However, the agency does not expect connectivity issues to be a problem for schools, but some LEAs may have an insufficient number of computers. The agency is currently working with all of the LEAs to determine the needs of each jurisdiction to make sure it is ready to administer the new assessment next year. MSDE will be conducting monthly phone calls with every LEA to track the progress being made in PARCC readiness beginning in January.

MSDE explained that another potential issue surrounding the administration of PARCC assessments is the expanded amount of time schools will have to give the test. For the MSAs, schools were given a strict two week schedule to give the assessments, but PARCC provides a one-month window. Superintendent Lowery said part of the readiness concerns for schools is figuring out how to logistically plan for the testing period and determine the most organized approach. MSDE is convening a task force at the elementary, middle, and high school levels that will help develop an ideal schedule for schools to adopt based on the assessment period provided.



#### **Strategy 4: Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education**

- The Number of STEM College Graduates has Grown by 25 Percent since the 2005-06 School Year.** The total number of community college students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree programs slightly increased in 2012 (the last year of available data), but the percentage of overall enrollments decreased by .2 percentage points. STEM enrollments at community colleges seemed to have hit a plateau in 2012. Science represents the largest STEM category by a wide margin in Maryland community colleges, and its number of enrollments decreased from 15,862 in 2011 to 15,552 in 2012. The total number of STEM degrees awarded by Maryland public and private colleges in 2012 was 11,293, which is a 25 percent increase since 2006. The Governor set a goal to increase the number of STEM graduates by 40 percent by 2015, which would be a total of 12,667 graduates. MHEC expects to have updated graduation data for 2013 before the end of the year.



- **Improving Computer Science Education in Maryland.** By 2018, it is estimated that 40,000 new computing-related jobs will become available in Maryland every year, but currently only around 2,000 bachelor's degrees in computing and information systems are being awarded in Maryland. CE-21-Maryland, a planning project led by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) developed with the goal of increasing computer science education in Maryland, estimates that less than three percent of Maryland high school students are enrolled in introductory computer science classes each year. A [recent report](#) published by CE-21 stated that one reason for low participation is the lack of computer science teachers in Maryland. In fact, computer science was found to be a "critical staffing need" by MSDE for at least the last five years in the latest Teacher Staffing Report. The University System of Maryland (USM) reported that it has seen a 65 percent increase in the number of computer science degrees awarded over the past five years, but it is still not keeping up with demand from the private sector.

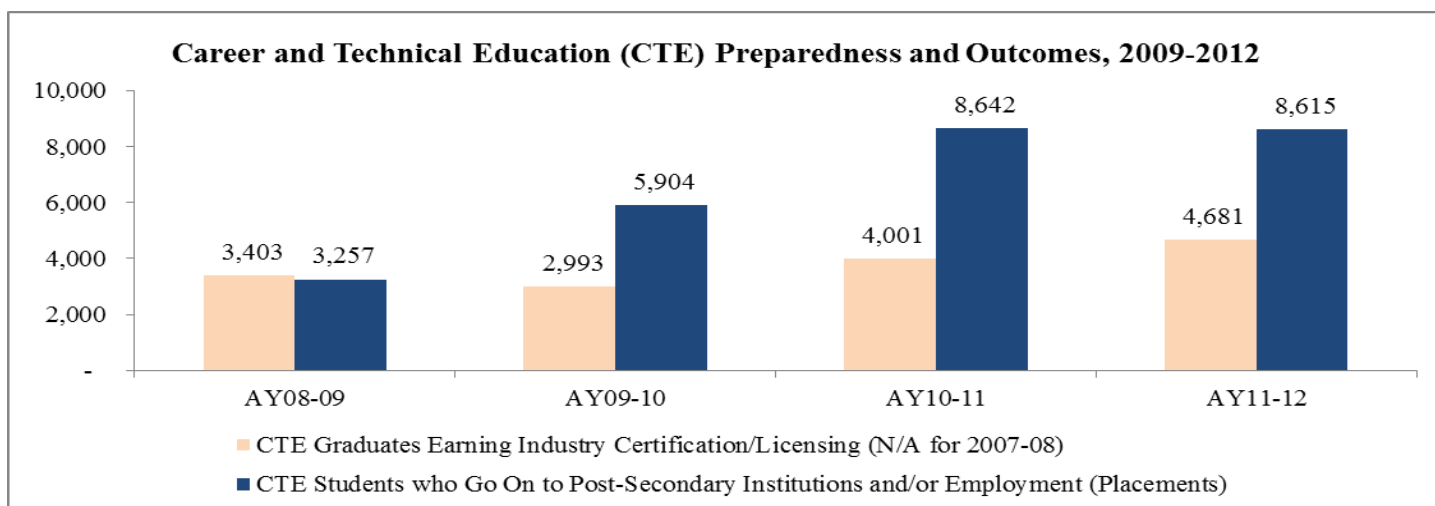
MSDE indicated that several new partnerships and initiatives have started over the last several years to try and increase computer science education in Maryland. The agency partnered with UMBC for a new computer science program in the CTE department that will be a sequence of four courses, articulation to the college level, and provide industry certifications. Additionally, nine high schools across six LEAs are now offering a new computer science program of study this year and MSDE has worked to develop three new online computer science courses. The agency also reported that UMBC is taking the lead to try and recruit more computer science teachers to Maryland, and that as a result of the CCRCCA, AP computer science will likely count as a math course for high schools in the near future instead of as an elective.

#### **Strategy 5: Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

- **The Number of CTE Certifications and Placements Continues to Grow in Maryland.** Maryland has made significant progress in recent years in providing high school students with the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials in various career fields. The number of CTE graduates who have earned industry certifications/licenses has increased by 37.6 percent from 2009 to 2012 (3,403-4,681). Additionally, the number of CTE high school students who go on to post-secondary schools and/or employment has increased by 165 percent since 2009. MSDE, in partnership with industry advisory groups has identified ten "Career Clusters" that represent the core business functions in broad industries, such as construction and information technology. The Cluster framework includes listings of available career options with an associate's degree or less, a bachelor's degree, and more than a bachelor's degree. Business partners continue to work with the MSDE to identify specific career pathways for each career cluster.

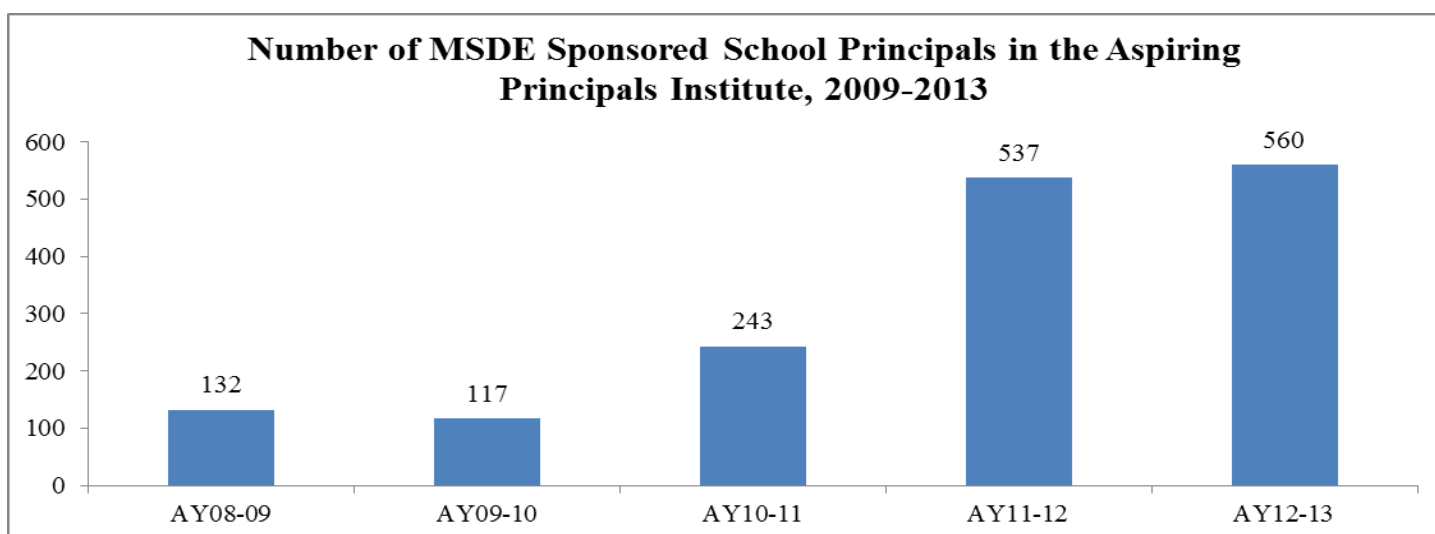
#### **MSDE List of 10 Career Clusters**

- Arts, Media and Communication
- Business, Management and Finance
- Consumer Services, Hospitality and Tourism
- Construction and Development
- Environmental, Agricultural and Natural Resource Systems
- Health and Biosciences
- Human Resource Services
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
- Transportation Technologies



### Strategy 6: Provide Teacher and Principal Support

- MSDE Reports that 560 Principals were Enrolled in the Aspiring Principal's Academy Last Year.** MSDE has several programs in place to help develop and improve the effectiveness of its principals. One of these programs is the Aspiring Principal's Institute, which is a designed learning experience for school leaders who have been chosen by their superintendents to participate in the program. The Institute was established during the 2007-08 school year and has grown from 132 participants in 2008 to 560 in 2013. The program, among other things, helps principals understand the components of school culture, analyze the effectiveness of certain classroom instruction techniques, and formulate strategies to improve future performance. MSDE reported that it has been trying to overhaul the Institute over the last several years to give it a targeted approach that provides aspiring principles with the skills necessary to succeed, especially in challenging schools. The Institute is only a three day program, so the agency tries to make the experience as efficient as possible.

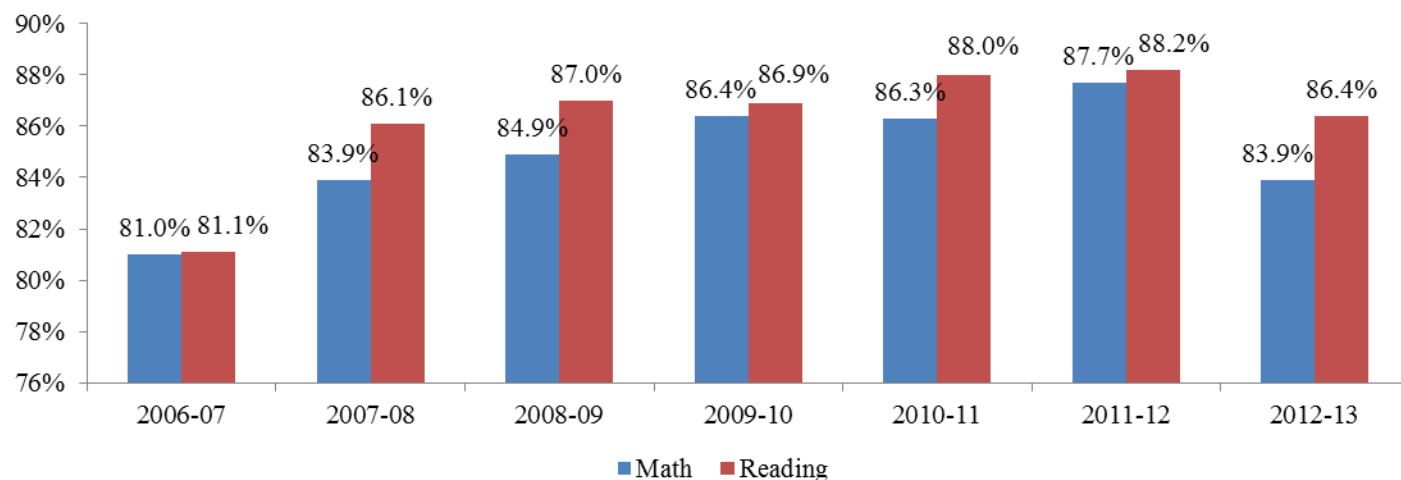


### State Performance on the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs)

- MSA Scores Declined in 2013 as the State Begins to Transition to the New PARCC Assessments.** Last year, MSA scores dropped in almost every jurisdiction, slowing the significant progress that had been made since the beginning of the Governor's administration. The math proficiency scores decreased by roughly four percent for both elementary and middle school students, and only middle school reading had a slight increase.

The lower scores were mostly credited to the transition the State is currently going through in preparing for the PARCC assessments beginning in the 2014-15 school year. MSDE explained that Maryland teachers and principals began implementing the Common Core curriculum last year in the majority of districts, so the MSAs were not aligned with what teachers were focusing on in class. The agency reported that the results of this year's MSAs will not be used for school accountability, but it will be used as an important informative measure. Even though the MSAs will not be given the same level of importance this year as in years past, MSDE has emphasized to teachers and schools that overall performance will still be assessed at the end of the school year.

**MSA Proficiency Rate for Elementary School Students, 2007-2013**



**MSA Proficiency Rate for Middle School Students, 2007-2013**

